



## BONNER COUNTY NOXIOUS WEEDS

1500 Hwy 2, Suite 101 • Sandpoint, ID 83864 • Phone: (208) 255-5681ext.6  
<https://www.bonnercountyid.gov/noxious-weeds>

### Weed of the Month

By Chase Youngdahl, *Bonner County Weeds Manager*

I really don't want to think about fall yet, being that it's mid-August as I'm writing this. But we are indeed on the home stretch of summer, and this is the fall installment of the Round Up, so I should probably get with the program. :-)

An odd issue recently cropped up (I have no idea where the issue will be by the time of publishing) involving unsolicited seeds from China. These seeds have been mailed to random addresses across the country, including residents in Idaho and Bonner County. If this is still happening and you receive a seed package that you did not order, do not open it, and please notify the USDA-APHIS office in Idaho for instructions on disposal. If the call volume is too high and you have trouble connecting to their office, give my office a call and I can provide you with an APHIS address to mail the seeds & packaging to. These packages may or may not contain new invasive plants, but properly dealing with seeds from an unknown source falls into the prevention category of weed control. Play it safe!

Weed of the month is **Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*)**, a robust perennial grass. This is an Idaho state listed noxious weed, but one that we do not have in Bonner County yet. My hope is that it never does show up, but staying in line with the current life theme of the "unknown"...who knows! It's as close as eastern Kootenai County, so there is reason for concern and attention. Common Reed is a wetland grass; found in riparian areas and shoreline margins of lakes and ponds. With as much prime area as Bonner County has in regards to real estate with lake frontage [and wildlife habitat], this could be a major threat if it shows up and is given a chance to establish itself. It grows anywhere from 6 – 15 feet in height, and the leaf blades can reach 2 feet long and 1 – 2 inches wide. The inflorescence (flower parts & seed heads) is 6 – 16 inches long and has a very fluffy, feathery appearance. This thing is gargantuan! The dense stands that it creates hinders animal movement and it chokes out the desirable, native vegetation that they need. You're not going to want to bother walking through it to get to the shoreline either, unless you're packing a chainsaw! That last part was a joke, but not far from reality. There are native reeds (they're smaller), but the home range of *Phragmites australis* is Eurasia and Africa. It is reported to have been introduced to North America via contaminated water from ship ballasts.



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If you identify *Phragmites australis*, let my office know right away; it would be treated as an EDRR (early detection, rapid response) noxious weed. The seed viability is low, but it spreads like a fiend vegetatively—quickly developing a large network of rhizomes and stolons. Being that it's a vegetative spreading grass that grows near water, control options are limited to non-selective [aquatic labeled] herbicides; certain Glyphosate products and/or Imazapyr.

We're approaching the fall window for effective weed control in pastures and turf—September through October. Some weeds, mostly turf weeds and certain invasive annuals, can even respond effectively to herbicide treatments performed into and through November if the snow and hard frost situation allows. Nutrient loads in plants move into the roots in the fall [to prepare for winter dormancy], which makes for a great opportunity to take out perennial weeds, especially the rhizomatous varieties. Systemic herbicides will move like crazy right down into the root system along with the nutrients. Regarding winter annual weeds, the seedlings for next year's crop have developed by the middle of fall, so with a fall treatment you're stopping the problem in its tracks. Winter annuals bolt first thing the following spring, narrowing your window for an effective spring treatment. If you're looking to try a fall weed control strategy, reach out for specific advice. It may be the right approach for your use site and species of concern.